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Round Robin

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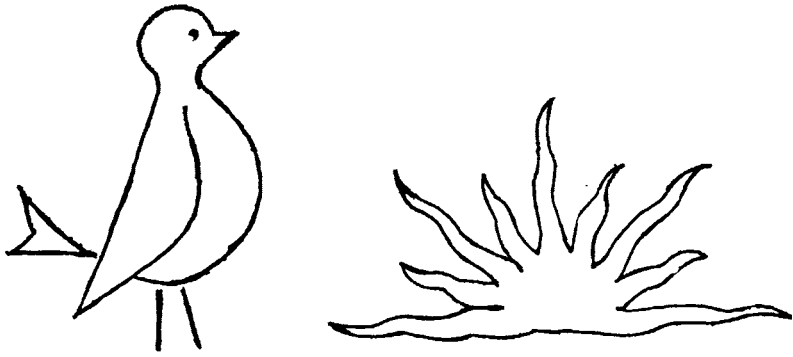
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ROUND ROBIN

Dorothy E. Smith, Editor

Dear Readers,

One of the greatest problems facing a teacher is finding appropriate reading material for her students. It is impossible to have first-hand knowledge of a representative selection of books on the student's reading level and also to keep pace with the scholarly works which are so important to the teacher. There are many bibliographies, some good, some poor, but there are few which are excellent and annotated.

We are fortunate indeed in having someone who read *and* compiled a superior list of books for Junior High School students. This list is broken down into several sections and we will present them one section at a time in this and subsequent Round Robins. Our heartfelt thanks to Mary P. Small.

Dear Editor:

The annotated bibliography which follows is the result of my examination of a variety of materials available for teaching reading to retarded readers in junior high school. The bibliography includes trade books, short story collections, series books, and textbooks and workbooks. A list of the selection aids which I consulted is also included. The range of reading difficulty of most of the materials listed is from fourth grade through seventh grade. I have made no particular attempt to examine materials for the severely retarded reader.

I have reviewed these materials primarily from the point of view of their potential usefulness in an individualized reading program, in which each student selects his own reading materials and progresses at his own rate. I have therefore been most interested in becoming familiar with trade books and with some of the less forbidding collec-

tions of short stories, since these will presumably be the basic materials for such a reading program.

Except for the four books published in 1965 or later, all of the trade books which I read are listed in one or more of the book lists on pages 16-17. The reading level by grade was obtained from these sources and is indicated on the bibliography in parentheses by the symbol *rd*. In addition, all of the titles except for the most recent (*The Outsiders*, published in 1967) appear in the *Junior High School Library Catalog** or in the annual supplements to the *Catalog*. The quality of the books varies considerably, although all of them are acceptable; I have commented in the annotations only on books that in my judgment are especially good. I have also indicated which books are clearly of interest primarily to boys or to girls and which books appear to be primarily of interest to and suitable for older junior high school students. Finally, I have indicated which of the trade books are included in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth," a list of about 80 titles prepared by the Young Adult Services Division of the American Library Association. Because of their urban settings and realistic portrayal of some aspects of urban adolescent life, I have included four books—*Jazz Country*, *Durango Street*, *The Outsiders*, and *North Town*—too recent to appear on the lists of books recommended for poor readers. I expect that these books are popular with teen-agers, particularly from the eighth or ninth grade on up, and I would guess that the reading level of these books is about seventh grade.

Sincerely,
Mary P. Small
Reading Improvement Teacher
Northeastern Junior High
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Trade Books

Amerman, Lockhart. *Guns in the Heather*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963. 191 p. Fiction. (rd 7)

Jonathan Flower is kidnapped from the school he attends in Scotland by ruthless foreign agents intent on preventing his father, an American with a secret government job, from interfering with their operations.

* Shor, Rachel, and Estelle A. Fidell, eds., *Junior High School Library Catalog*. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1965.

Bonham, Frank. *Durango Street*. New York: Dutton, 1965. 190 p. Fiction.

The second day that Rufus Henry is in the Durango Street Housing Project, he is forced to violate his parole and join a gang in order to gain protection against another gang out to get him. (Boys; suitable for 9th grade up. Listed in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

Burnford, Sheila. *The Incredible Journey*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1961. 145 p. Fiction. (rd 6-7)

A Siamese cat, an old English bull terrier and a Labrador retriever set out on an adventurous 200-mile journey across the Ontario wilderness to return to their master's home. (Especially good; portrays animals sympathetically, credibly, and whimsically.)

Clarke, Tom E. *The Puddle Jumper*. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1960. 191 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

Arne Petersen, the son of a bush pilot in Alaska, flies with his father whenever he can but is too anxious to fly by himself to wait until he is 18 and old enough for a commercial pilot's license. (Boys)

Felsen, Henry Gregor. *Hot Rod*. New York: Dutton, 1950. 188 p. Fiction. (rd 7)

Bud Crayne, who has the fastest car in town, boasts that "Speed will get you anywhere." He learns that there is more to handling a car than just speed. (Boys. Listed in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1952. 285 p. Nonfiction. (rd 5)

Anne Frank and her family, along with another family, spent two years hiding in a "secret annex" during the Nazi occupation of Holland in World War II. The diary Anne kept during this period reveals the fear, the misunderstandings, and the boredom felt by people confined day and night to a few small rooms at the back of an office building and Anne's own feelings and concerns as an adolescent girl. (Excellent; a highly perceptive commentary on human relationships and on adolescence. Listed in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

Gault, William Campbell. *Dirt Track Summer*. New York: Dutton, 1961. 191 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

Tom and Skipper Ludlow, sons of a famous racing mechanic, and their friend Jose Lopez spend a summer doing dirt-track racing in their rebuilt Crager. (Boys)

Gipson, Fred. *Old Yeller*. New York: Harper, 1956. 158 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

During the summer of 1860, when fourteen-year-old Travis is left as head of the family while his father drives cattle from Texas to Kansas, an ugly yellow dog attaches himself to the family and takes on fighting bulls, thieving raccoons, a bear, and a mad wolf.

Graham, Lorenz. *North Town*. New York: Crowell, 1965. 220 p. Fiction.

David Williams and his family move to North Town, where David finds that although the situation for Negroes is quite different from that in the South, he still has to face many problems. (Listed in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

Heinlein, Robert A. *Citizen of the Galaxy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957. 302 p. Fiction. (rd 7)

Young Thorby is sold in a slave market to Baslim the Cripple, a beggar, on the planet Jubbul. Thorby finally discovers the secret of who he is and why Baslim bought him. (Boys. Probably too difficult and sophisticated for retarded readers in junior high school.)

Hentoff, Nat. *Jazz Country*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965. Fiction.

Tom Curtis, a high-school junior whose ambition is to be a jazz musician, meets by chance the famous Moses Godfrey. Through Godfrey and his friends, Tom learns what it means to be a jazz musician—especially a white jazz musician. (Listed in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

Hinton, S. E. *The Outsiders*. New York: Viking, 1967. 188 p. Fiction.

Ponyboy, a "greaser," narrates a story of the conflict between the "greasers" from the wrong side of town and the upper-middle-class "socs" and the tragic results it has for a group of teenagers in a southwestern city. The author is a seventeen-year-old. (Suitable for 9th grade up. A realistic and psychologically subtle treatment of urban adolescence; serious themes dealt with seriously.)

Hunt, Irene. *Across Five Aprils*. Chicago: Follett, 1964. 223 p. Fiction. (rd 6)

When the Civil War begins and the men in the Creighton family go off to fight, ten-year-old Jethro has to take over his father's farm in southern Illinois. The effects of the war on this family are seen through Jethro's eyes as he becomes a man during the five years of the war. (Newberry Medal, 1964)

James, Will. *Smoky, the Cowhorse*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954. (First published in 1926) 310 p. Fiction. (rd 6-7)

Clint, bronc buster for the Rocking R ranch, is the only man who can ride Smoky without being thrown. One winter Smoky is stolen from the range and becomes quite a different animal from the spirited horse Clint knew. (The cowboy's vernacular in which the story is told may make reading difficult for some students. Unfortunately, the only real villain is "a half-breed of Mexican and other blood that's darker." Newberry Medal, 1927.)

Kjelgaard, Jim. *Big Red*. New York: Holiday House, 1956. (First published in 1945) 254 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

Dan, a trapper's son, is allowed to train a champion Irish setter. Their adventures in the Wintapi wilderness include run-ins with a wolverine, an escaped prisoner, and Old Majesty, the great outlaw bear. ("A favorite boy-dog story."—Strang)

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. New York: Farrar, Straus, 1962. 211 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

Meg, her five-year-old brother Charles Wallace, and a friend, Calvin O'Keefe, discover that there is a wrinkle in time when they are taken by three strange friends to find Meg's father, who has been missing for a year on a secret mission in outer space.

Neville, Emily. *It's Like This, Cat*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963. 180 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

Davie Mitchell acquires a stray cat from an eccentric neighbor and because of the cat meets Tom Ransom, a troubled college student, and Mary, a girl his own age. (Newberry Medal, 1964. Listed in "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphin*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960. 184 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

When the rest of her people leave the rocky island of San Nicholas, some 75 miles off the California coast, a twelve-year-old Indiana girl named Karana is left behind and lives alone on the island for eighteen years. Based on an actual event. (Very good, the first-person narrative is simple and believable. Newberry Medal, 1961)

Stolz, Mary. *Who Wants Music on Monday?* New York: Harper and Row, 1963. 267 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

Cassie Dunne, who is often bluntly honest, can't understand her pretty, self-centered older sister Lotta, but she admires her older brother Vincent, a sophomore in college. (Girls, especially 9th grade up. All of Stolz's books are listed on "Favorite Books of Disadvantaged Youth.")

Terhune, Albert Payson. *Lad: A Dog*. New York: Dutton, 1947. (First published in 1919) 371 p. Fiction. (rd 7)

A story based on a real collie—Sunnybank Lad—who lived on the author's estate in New Jersey. ("Terhune's stories of this and other collies are among the most popular of all dog books."—Strang)

Tunis, John R. *Go, Team, Go!* New York: Morrow, 1954. 215 p. Fiction. (rd 7)

The Ridgewood high school basketball team wins the state tournament; but conflict, in which the whole community becomes involved, develops the next year between the over-confident team and coach Hooks Barnum when he puts the B team in after the champions lose the first game. (Boys)

Ullman, James Ramsey. *Banner in the Sky*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1954. 252 p. Fiction. (rd 5)

The villagers of Kurtal claimed that the Citadel—the highest mountain in Switzerland—was unclimbable. But sixteen-year-old Rudi Matt is determined to climb the mountain on which his father was killed and joins the expedition of the famous climber Captain Winter. (Boys)